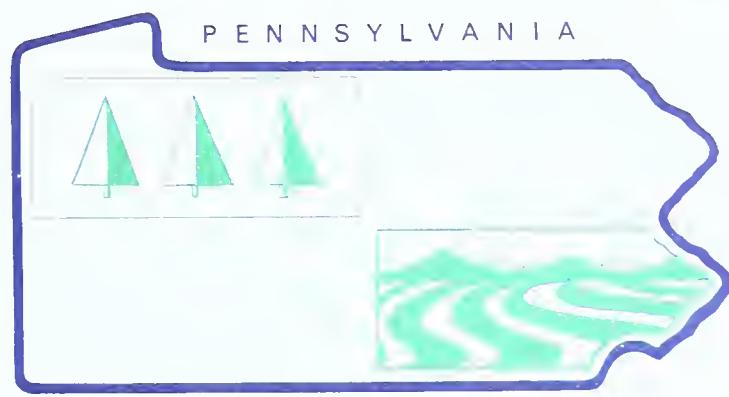


INTERIM REPORT OF THE GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND



October 1968

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION
2301 NORTH CAMERON STREET, ROOM 203
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120



GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE FOR THE
PRESERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

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STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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TRANSFER

October 7, 1968

The Honorable Raymond P. Shafer, Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
225 Capitol Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Dear Governor Shafer:

The Committee for the Preservation of Agricultural Land is pleased to present this interim report for your consideration. It is intended that this report will serve two basic purposes:

1. Acquaint you with the procedures employed by the committee, and with the progress which it has made in carrying out your assignment.
2. Enable the committee to review its efforts to date and to plan for the completion of a constructive and meaningful final report. A target date of June 30, 1969 has been set for the completion of the final report.

The committee has discussed the advisability of preparing a formal interim report for general distribution. We have concluded, however, that this would be premature. While we have formed opinions, they are not fully documented. A series of public hearings are planned to be held early in 1969, and are planned so as to invite the participation of interested persons from all parts of the Commonwealth.

The committee wishes to gratefully acknowledge the cooperation of the Secretary of Agriculture, Leland H. Bull, and the members of his staff, particularly that of the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

Should you have questions to ask of the committee, we are at your service.

Sincerely yours,

Curtis B. Wachsmuth

C. B. Wachsmuth
Chairman

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FOREWORD

The purpose of this report is to provide an interim picture of the committee's progress to date in formulating recommendations to preserve agricultural land in Pennsylvania consistent with other land uses of the Commonwealth. The 18-member committee, representing various conservation and agricultural interests, finance and industry, (Appendix A) was appointed on December 18, 1967 by Governor Raymond P. Shafer.

Much of the actual investigation of the land-use problems by the committee is being conducted by seven subcommittees (Appendix B) with assistance from a program specialist of the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission. The subcommittees are composed of committee members who have a particular interest or knowledge in the subjects under study.

The subcommittees are considering the following:

1. Importance of food and fiber production.
2. Value to Pennsylvania for the preservation of agricultural land.
3. Proper use and treatment of agricultural and related land.
4. State government structures as they affect agriculture.
5. Private and public development practices and their economics.
6. Land acquisition methods.
7. Public relations and publicity.

The various subcommittees have been consulting with appropriate individuals, agencies and organizations (Appendix C) to gather facts and opinions, and have been reporting their progress to the full committee at its monthly meetings.

The information established by these subcommittees has pointed out the complexity of the problem under study and has resulted in a redefinition of the term "agricultural land." (Appendix D)

The committee has interpreted agricultural land to include all lands within the Commonwealth that produce animal or plant products for commercial purposes. Thus, the future use of more than 17 million acres of forest land and 7 million acres of farmland is under study by the committee.

It is the results of these investigations, plus the public's opinion, (Appendix E) that will direct the committee's recommendations to bring about an action program designed to meet the needs of the people of Pennsylvania to preserve land for agricultural use. (Appendix F)

RATIONALE FOR PRESERVING LAND FOR AGRICULTURE

The importance of Pennsylvania's agricultural land and related agribusiness may be determined economically by its broad impact in four areas. These, in brief, include: (A) production of food and fiber, (B) the need for more and better equipment and supplies, (C) food and fiber processing, (D) distribution.

From the Commonwealth's 77,000 farms come food and fiber valued at almost a billion dollars annually (1). In the production of these commodities, farm businesses generate the need for equipment and services providing employment for a substantial portion of the State's working force.

More than 2.1 million people receive wages of 9.5 billion dollars (2), (3). The \$4 billion food processing industry alone provides employment for eight percent of the State's manufacturing working force (2). Agribusiness, a 14 billion dollar industry, is represented in 35 percent of all retail establishments accounting for 32 percent of the state's total annual retail sales (3).

In considering the importance of Pennsylvania's food and fiber production, three bases of measurement can be used: (A) total cash value, as in dairy products, over \$368 million annually (1), (B) national importance, as in the case of specialty crops such as mushrooms, 60 percent of the national total (4), (C) rank in production nationally. According to production, Pennsylvania ranks within the top ten in the production of apples, barley, cherries, chicken and turkey hatcheries, clover-timothy hay, eggs, grapes, maple syrup, milk, mushrooms, oats, peaches, pears, roses, rye, tobacco, and timothy seed (1). Pennsylvania ranks second among North Atlantic states in cash receipts received by farmers because of the wide variety of specialty crops grown (4).

Pennsylvania's vast woodlands make a significant contribution to the agricultural economy, both in value of timber and the work force necessary to process forest products. An annual harvest of 600,000 cords valued at \$10,000,000 is used in 12 pulp mills (5). Eighty-three percent of the pulp wood is harvested from privately owned woodlands (6). The value placed on 520 million board feet of lumber harvested annually is \$80 million (6). The payroll of forest products manufacturing companies was \$263 million (7), with over 5,000 products derived from wood. Pennsylvania ranks second among states in hardwood lumber production (8).

The source of the food and fiber supply is of little interest to the Pennsylvania buyer and consumer. Purchases are based on price, quality, and packaging convenience. Pennsylvania producers can provide a high quality, fresh product to nearly two-thirds of the nation, since these people live within a 500-mile radius of Pennsylvania.

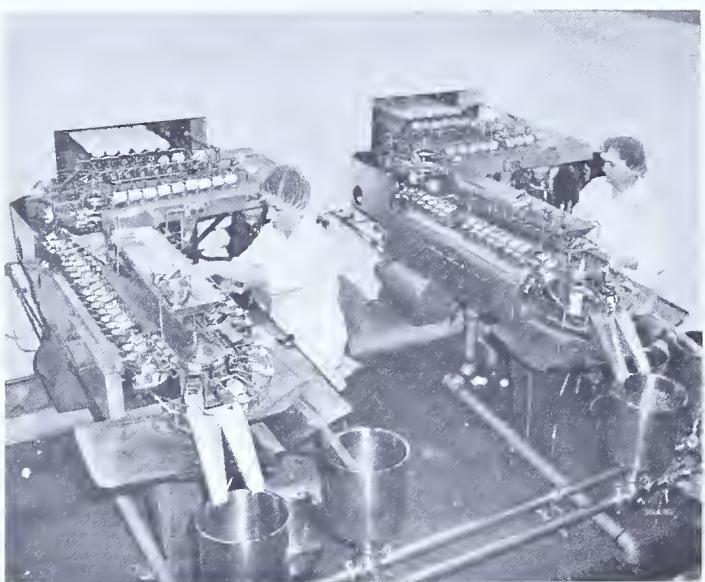


Figure 1. Nearly 8 percent of the state's manufacturing working force, earning over 641 million dollars in 1966, are employed by the 4 billion dollar food processing industry.



Figure 2. Of the 935 million dollars received by farmers in 1966 for their products, 385 million dollars was received by dairy farmers for their 6.8 billion pounds of milk.



Figure 3. Nearly 85,000 workers in wood and allied products industries received over 475 million dollars in wages.



Figure 4. All consumers are interested in obtaining adequate quantities of high quality produce at a reasonable price.

Every citizen has a stake in agriculture as a consumer. The farmer and forester must make a profit in order to stay in business; however, more efficient production methods have resulted in lower costs of production which are a definite advantage to the consumer when he buys his food and fiber. Most food crops can only be raised in larger quantity and better quality on prime soil although some products can be produced on poor soils.

For most crops, over twice as much can be produced on the good soils in Pennsylvania, as compared to the poor soils. And some of our speciality crops, such as grapes, cigar leaf tobacco, and fruit, are only adapted to special areas in the state. The farmer utilizing good soils can economically sell his produce at competitive prices and at the same time must keep improving his methods of operation. Modernization is a continuing process for agriculture, with the successful operator constantly acquiring newer and more efficient equipment and supplies to grow produce in a larger quantity and of a higher quality at reduced costs.

The preserving of good land for agricultural use will aid Pennsylvanians to be provided with ample food and fiber. Once land is used for most non-agricultural uses, it is virtually lost to future production of food and fiber. We need to have enough acres to insure an adequate supply of food and fiber for the expanded population of the future.

A strategy should be developed to insure the necessary acreage. The provision of "extra" acres for future agricultural use could now provide open space area and later other uses for our expanded population and to provide food for other countries. The application of modern conservation farming methods on many of these farms will be necessary in order to prevent erosion.

We face a growing need for strategically located open space areas in Pennsylvania to provide for the physical and mental well being of our citizens in urban and rural areas. Recreational needs, wildlife, mental health and scenic beauty may all be adequately provided for through the reservation of "extra" agricultural acres under the multiple use concept. Wildlife and recreation, especially camping, hiking, hunting and fishing, are best suited to agricultural areas. An added benefit may be realized in that these agricultural lands will continue to be tax-contributing areas and not a tax burden on the citizens of the state as is the case with publicly owned recreation areas. Even where the in-lieu-of taxes are paid, monies contributed to the local municipalities are not equal to the tax loss.



Figure 5. High production can be expected from this corn growing on good limestone soils in Lebanon County, July 30, 1968.



Figure 6. Low production can be expected from this corn growing on poor shale soils in Lebanon County, July 30, 1968.



Figure 7. Fruit production is best adapted on special soils on rolling topography in the Adams County area.



Figure 8. Strategically located recreation areas are needed in rural as well as urban areas of the state.

GOVERNMENT ROLE IN PRESERVING LAND FOR AGRICULTURE.

Unfortunately, it seems that agriculture's relationship with other segments of society is often forgotten or disregarded. Agricultural provisions in the best interests of all segments of our population are often ignored by planners. Planners appear to frequently consider only the immediate returns via taxes through development of agricultural acres for non-agricultural use rather than a long-term and lasting gain through careful planning and perhaps multiple use of these acres. Wisely planned urban growth may prevent unnecessary use of prime soil areas, thus preventing land being rendered economically unfeasible for agricultural use due to lack of access, proximity to dwellings, size of individual tracts or other reasons.

It would seem not only advisable, but even imperative, that all levels of government should be involved in determining the use of this valuable natural resource - land. The need for agricultural land should be recognized by planners at all levels of government, not just to fulfill the needs of agriculture, but to provide for the needs of all the Commonwealth, such as urban growth, industrial expansion, recreation uses, development of public utilities and transportation, as well as its essential use for agriculture. Future land needs and use should be carefully considered before present land use is changed for any purpose.

Proper land use and public acquisition of land or certain land rights can be beneficial for both public and private interests, both in immediate costs and long range planning. Provisions should be made now for future prosperity and benefits.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY.

Members of the Governor's Committee for the Preservation of Agricultural Land and the staff have been in contact with agencies and organizations at all levels to acquaint them with the Committee's work and determine specific needs and problems concerning a wide range of the Commonwealth's citizens.

Committee members and staff have presented programs at 25 meetings throughout the state and presented 3 programs on television. News articles have appeared in a number of newspapers and magazines throughout the state.

FUTURE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES.

We have under study the problems, proposed plans and solutions offered by similar groups in other states. We are examining the methods now in use and those which have been proposed in other states to evaluate and control land use.

We are planning a series of public hearings in conveniently located areas of the Commonwealth to learn the viewpoints and recommendations of individual citizens, groups and organizations. Each of the public hearings will be preceded by coordinated publicity through various news media in that area in an effort to reach everyone with something to contribute.

Following our study of plans advanced by other states, information gathered through the public hearings and a thorough examination of the situation in Pennsylvania, the Committee will submit a final report offering our conclusions and recommendations by June 30, 1969.

References

- (1) - Pennsylvania Crops and Livestock Annual Summary 1967,
Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service
- (2) - Pennsylvania Statistical Abstract (1968),
Pennsylvania Department of Internal Affairs
- (3) - U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Business 1963
- (4) - Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service Data
- (5) - Timber Resources in Pennsylvania, 1968
- (6) - Pennsylvania Department of Forests and Waters Data
- (7) - Government Land Acquisition, Pennsylvania Edition,
American Forest Products Industries, 1965
- (8) - Pennsylvania Forest Industries Statistics,
Pennsylvania Department of Commerce, June 1967

COMMITTEE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

Curtis B. Wachsmuth, Chairman
 Consultant to Farmer Cooperatives;
 Member, Board of Directors of
 Nationwide Insurance Company

Representative William H. Ashton
 Chairman, House Agriculture and
 Dairy Industries Committee

A. L. Bennett
 General Manager, Armstrong Forest
 Division of Texas Gulf Sulphur Company;
 Chairman, Forest Resources Committee,
 State Chamber of Commerce

Gerald Biggs
 Master Farmer; Beef Farmer; President
 Pennsylvania Farmers Association

George G. Connor
 Former Manager of Pennsylvania Farm
 Bureau Cooperative and Senior Vice-
 President of Agway; President,
 Livestock Allied Industries

Charles B. Forney
 Chairman, Agriculture Committee,
 Pennsylvania State Bankers Association

Amos H. Funk
 Master Farmer; Vegetable Farmer;
 Member, Committee on Agriculture;
 Member and Past President, Pennsylvania
 Association of Conservation Districts;
 Member, State Soil and Water
 Conservation Commission

Senator D. Elmer Hawbaker
 Dairy Farmer; Chairman, Senate
 Agriculture Committee

Dr. M. E. John
 College of Agriculture, The
 Pennsylvania State University

Robert C. Lott
 Master Farmer; Fruit Farmer;
 Member and Past President, Pennsylvania
 Association of Conservation Districts;
 Member, State Soil and Water Conservation
 Commission

Dr. Norman F. Reber
 Editor, Pennsylvania Farmer Magazine

John R. Rodgers
 Dairy Farmer; Past President, Grassland
 Council; President, Pennsylvania State
 University Agriculture Advisory Council

C. L. Rumberger
 Beef Farmer; Retired Vice-President in
 Charge of Development, H. J. Heinz Company,
 Pittsburgh

John W. Scott
 Master, Pennsylvania State Grange

L. H. Skromme
 Vice-President for Engineering, New Holland
 Division - Sperry Rand Corporation

Charles D. Snelling
 President, Tresler Orchards, Inc.;
 Vice-President, Mohr Orchards;
 President, Thermo-Dynamic Corporation

Charles M. Wolgemuth
 Director of Agribusiness, Hershey Estates;
 Member, Executive Committee, National
 Plowing Contest

David J. Woods
 Dairy Farmer; Past President, Pennsylvania
 Association of Soil and Water Conservation
 District Directors, Inc.; Chairman,
 Pennsoil Resource Conservation and
 Development Project

SUBCOMMITTEES AND THEIR AREAS OF CONSIDERATION

1. Importance of food and fiber production in Pennsylvania
 - a. As part of the National production 50 years from now
 - b. As it affects the consumer
 - c. As it affects the producer
 - d. As it affects the economy of Pennsylvania
 - e. Type of farming most practical by areas within the State

C. L. Rumberger, chairman; John R. Rodgers; and Dr. M. E. John

2. Value to Pennsylvania for the preservation of agricultural land
 - a. Open space conservation
 - b. Preserving the tax base, taxes, and incentives
 - c. Effects on other industries and public welfare
 - d. Economics of land use for agricultural purposes

Amos Funk, chairman; A. L. Bennett; L. H. Skromme; and Dr. M. E. John

3. Proper use and treatment of agricultural and related land
 - a. Inventory of Pennsylvania land, land classes, and trends in land use
 - b. Erosion control needs
 - c. Effects of strip mining
 - d. Water resources
 1. PL 566 projects
 2. River basins
 3. Irrigation
 - e. Conservation of vegetative cover

David Woods, chairman; and Representative William Ashton

4. A study of state government structures as they affect agriculture
 - a. Other State's activities
 - b. A study and follow-up of proposed laws and also legal proceedings regarding land uses during the life of the committee

Senator Elmer Hawbaker, chairman; Robert Lott; and Gerald Biggs

5. A study of private and public development practices and their economics
 - a. Planning and zoning
 - b. A study of local, county, and State planning agencies

Charles D. Snelling, chairman; Charles Wolgemuth; Charles Forney; C. Lee Rumberger; and George Connor

6. Land Acquisition
 - a. Eminent domain
 - b. Other methods

John W. Scott, chairman; Gerald A. Biggs; George Connor; and L. H. Skromme

7. Public relation and publicity

Norman Reber, chairman; Senator Elmer Hawbaker; and John R. Rodgers

ORGANIZATIONS CONSULTED

1. Adams County Apple Growers Association
2. American Forest Products Industries
3. American Home Foods
4. Armstrong Forest Division of Texas Gulf Sulphur Company
5. Berks County Commissioners
6. Berks County Planning Commission
7. Berks County Soil and Water Conservation District
8. Bradford County Commissioners
9. Bradford County Planning Commission
10. Brandywine Valley Association
11. Bucks County Planning Commission
12. California Department of Agriculture
13. California Farm Bureau Federation
14. Centre County Planning Commission
15. Centre Regional Planning Commission
16. Chester County Water Resources Authority
17. Clearfield County Extension Service
18. Clearfield County Planning Commission
19. Clearfield County Soil and Water Conservation District
20. Clinton County Extension Service
21. Forward Lands, Inc.
22. Hawaii Land Use Commission
23. Lancaster County Planning Commission
24. Land and Water Resource Institute
25. Larson Construction Company
26. Lebanon County Chapter of Izaac Walton League
27. Lebanon County Commissioners
28. Lebanon County Farmers Association
29. Lebanon County Planning and Zoning Commission
30. Lehigh County Farmers Association
31. Lehigh County Soil and Water Conservation District
32. Maryland Commission on Agricultural Land Preservation
33. Mifflin County Soil and Water Conservation District
34. Milton Hershey School
35. Mountain Orchard Co-op., Inc.
36. National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
37. Neckura Casualty Insurance Company
38. New Jersey Department of Agriculture
39. New York State College of Agriculture at Cornell University
40. New York State Commission on Preservation of Agricultural Land
41. Northern Tier Regional Planning Commission
42. Pennsylvania Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Directors, Inc.
43. Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
44. Pennsylvania Department of Commerce
45. Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs

46. Pennsylvania Department of Forests and Waters
47. Pennsylvania Department of Health
48. Pennsylvania Department of Internal Affairs
49. Pennsylvania Department of Mines and Mineral Industries
50. Pennsylvania Farmers Association
51. Pennsylvania Fish Commission
52. Pennsylvania Forestry Association
53. Pennsylvania Game Commission
54. Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
55. Pennsylvania Power and Light Company
56. Resources for the Future, Inc.
57. Roma Construction Company
58. State Planning Board
59. State Tax Equalization Board
60. The Pennsylvania State University
61. The Rockefeller Foundation
62. University of Pennsylvania, Institute for Environmental Studies
63. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
64. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
65. USDA - Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service
66. USDA - Cooperative Extension Service
67. USDA - Economic Research Service
68. USDA - Farmers Home Administration
69. USDA - Forest Service
70. USDA - Statistical Reporting Service
71. USDA - Soil Conservation Service
72. York County Extension Service

DEFINITION OF TERMS - DRAFT COPY

Preservation of Agricultural Land - The word "preservation" used herein is synonymous with the word "conservation" or the wise-use concept for land maintained for agricultural purposes.

Agricultural Commodity - Any and all plant and animal products produced in this state for commercial purposes.

Agricultural Land - Land used for the purpose of producing an agricultural commodity including farmsteads, farm lanes and associated land, and land diverted from agricultural commodity production by an active Federal farm program, provided the diverted land has a conservation cover of grasses, legumes, trees, or wildlife shrubs.

Prime Agricultural Land - (1) All land which qualifies as Class I or II in the United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service Agricultural Land Use Capability Classification System, or (2) land which supports livestock used for the production of food and fiber, and has an annual carrying capacity equivalent to at least one animal unit per acre, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture, or (3) land which has returned from the production of unprocessed agricultural plant products, an annual gross value of not less than two hundred dollars (\$200.00) per acre for three of the previous five years, or (4) land planted with fruit or nut bearing trees, Christmas trees, vines, bushes or crops, which have a nonbearing period of less than ten years and during the commercial bearing period will normally return on an annual basis from the production of unprocessed agricultural plant production not less than two hundred dollars (\$200.00) per acre, or (5) land devoted to the production of unprocessed forest products, with a growth period in excess of ten years and a site index of at least 70 or excellent (site index is the height attained by the average dominant and co-dominant trees at age 50).

Cropland - Land currently tilled primarily for the production of grain, hay or silage, including cropland harvested, crop failure, summer follow, idle cropland, cropland in cover crops, or soil improvement crops not harvested or pastured, including land diverted under Federal diversion programs, rotation pasture and cropland being prepared for crops or newly seeded crops. Cropland also includes land used for the production of flowers, vegetables, fruits and nuts.

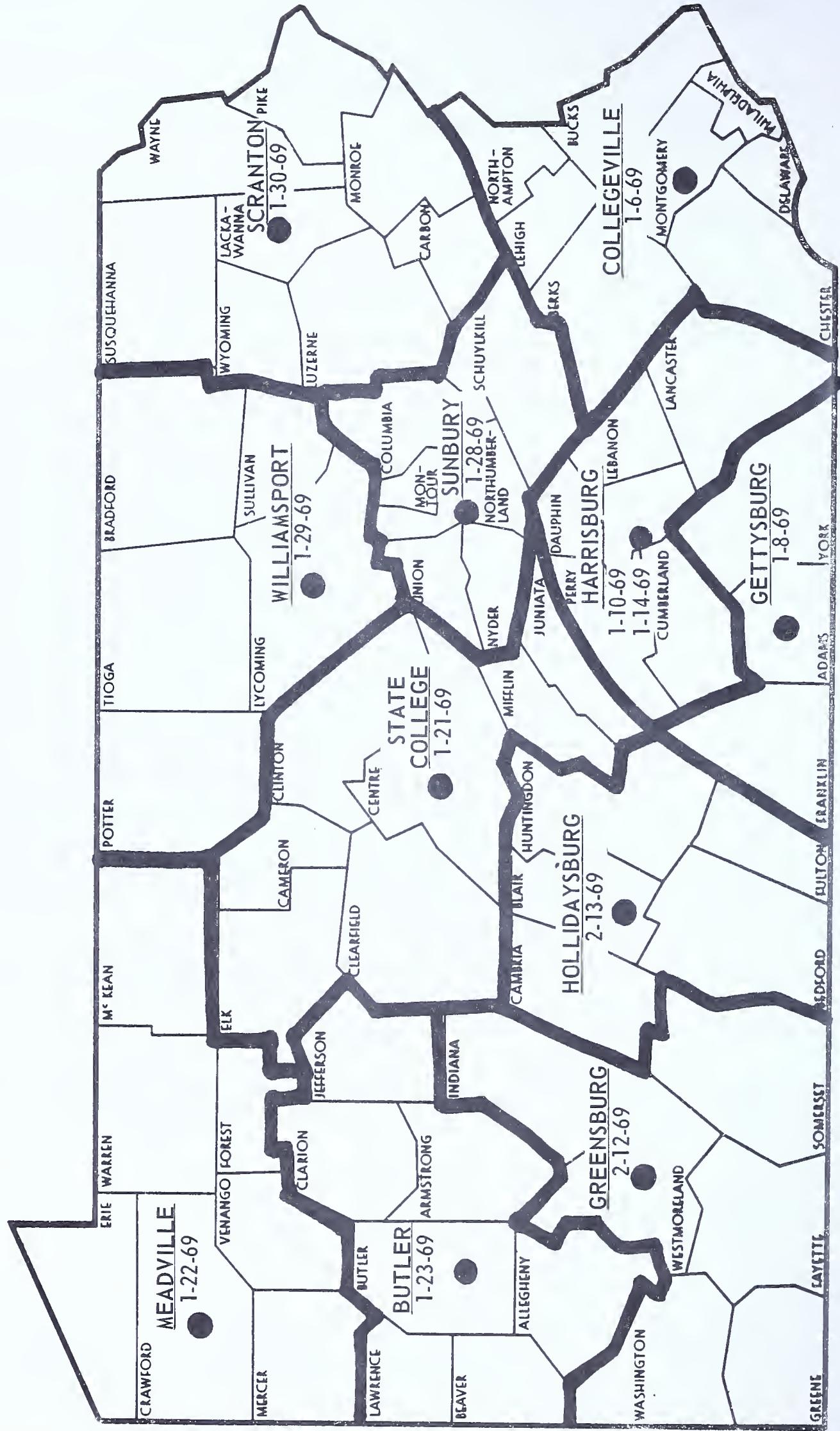
Pasture Land - Land currently in grasses or legumes, not in rotation, that is used primarily for grazing by domestic livestock. The land may contain shade trees or scattered timber trees with less than 10 percent canopy.

Forest and Woodland - Land currently stocked by forest trees of any size providing at least 10 percent canopy and capable of producing timber or other wood products, including newly planted areas, and which is primarily held for the production of timber or other wood products.

Recreation Land - Land that has been primarily set aside and usually is maintained for outdoor recreational uses such as parks, beaches, natural areas, open space areas, monuments, wildlife lands, and water areas for boating, fishing, and swimming.

Urbanizing Land - Land in transition from a rural to an urban environment. This land may partially or totally surround the urban area. It is characterized by existing or planned pockets of concentrated noncontiguous development near the urban land. It also includes major existing or proposed utilities and scattered developments of greater density than found in the rural areas, but of lower density than found in the urban areas.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Tentative Locations and Dates for
Regional Meetings

ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF CONTROLLING LAND USE

Governmental Action

- I. Purchase (and put to desired use)
 - A. Fee simple absolute
 - B. Fee simple determinable and fee simple conditional
 - C. Purchase (either A or B) and lease or sell back with use restrictions in the lease
 - D. Fee simple absolute subject to a life estate
 - E. Easements
 1. Affirmative (access to fishing stream, hunting land, or for hiking and riding trails)
 2. Negative (prohibit unwanted use, such as erection of buildings, billboards, and dumps)
- II. Land Use Regulation
 - A. Zoning
 - B. Compensable regulations
- III. Tax Policy
 - A. Automatic use-value Assessment
 - B. Use-value assessment applied for
 1. with tax roll back
 2. without tax roll back
 - C. Long term dedication of land to specific use with taxes based on such use.

Private Action

- I. Organization or group action (may use any method under point I of Governmental Action section)
- II. Actions for large scale land developers (control land use within the “new town” or similar development to include open space land)

COMMITTEE ADVISORS

Dr. Leland H. Bull, Secretary of Agriculture
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

Dr. Donald J. Epp, Assistant Professor
The Pennsylvania State University
College of Agriculture
Department of Agricultural Economics
and Rural Sociology

Charles F. Hess, Director
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